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NSC BRIEFING

4 May 1960

SOMALI AREAS

- I. The situation in the Somali-inhabited areas of the Horn of Africa is confused and explosive as the growing force of Somali nationalism threatens to increase present tension with Ethiopia.
  - A. Nationalists in the Italian trust territory (population about 1.5 million)--which is to achieve independence on 1 July--are campaigning for creation of "Greater Somalia" state. This increases prospects for serious difficulties between Somalis and Ethiopia.
    1. Nationalists aim at eventual unification of 2.5 million Somali tribesmen living in Horn area, including those in trust territory, British and French Somalilands, northern Kenya, and eastern Ethiopia.
    2. Trust territory's legislature seeks to promote UN-conducted plebiscite in all areas inhabited by ethnic Somalis in support of "Greater Somalia" concept.
  - B. Somalis in British Protectorate enthusiastic for early independence and unification with trust territory by 1 July.
    1. Recent visit by British Protectorate Somali leaders to trust territory led to joint communiqué calling for 1 July unification. They also discussed a unification agreement.

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C. Ethiopia, with pathological fear of Moslem encirclement, believes "Greater Somalia" concept will result in detaching its southeastern region of Ogaden (30% of Ethiopia), populated largely by nomadic Somalis. This Ethiopia intends to resist strongly.

1. Ethiopia has been suspicious of Rome and London for what it views as an effort to perpetuate their influence in Horn of Africa; controlled Addis Ababa press denounces forthcoming unification as Anglo-Italian plot.

D. Economic problems of destitute Somali areas pose challenge and can easily lead to misunderstanding between Somalis and Britain, Italy and US while giving UAR and Communists opportunity to expand influence.

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